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Africa's Education and the Sustainable Development Goals, 2030: Where's the Critical Nexus?

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Abstract

Among others, such as human capital, finance and policy harmonisation, the core argument in this paper is that the critical nexus of the SDGs (2030) is premised on the implementation communication processes. The experiences of implementing the MDGs framework (2000 to 2015) provide enormous relevance to that effect. However, from the literature, this element, implementation property of implementation communication in capacity building and its infrastructural development have failed to be integrated; perhaps, leading to its mixed outcomes at 2015. Furthermore, the observation, as far as the SDGs are concerned is that the ongoing communication is more of advocacy or sensitization devoid of implementation communication and its properties. It is this gap that the paper seeks to fill up to enable better localisation for SDGs maximum achievements come 2030.

Key words: Communication Implementation, SDGs, MDGs, Implementation Property

The *Ghana Millennium Development Goals [MDGs]: 2015 Report* examines it's progress made since 2000 towards the eight goals, their indicators and targets, to draw lessons from the implementation and monitoring of the MDGs. Prior to that it had also biannually produced six (6) monitoring progress reports. Over the last one and half decades (2000-2015), such reports abound for country, regional and continental levels by UN Agencies and Task Forces. Reviewing this literature for implementation related matters found among others, communication, skewed towards a particular direction, advocacy and awareness creation. That left out Communication for implementation or implementation communication which is a further need to complement and support the former to undertake the actual implementation programmes and projects. This is notwithstanding the several identified means of implementation [MoI] since the Agenda 21 Earth Summit of 1992 (Olsen et al., 2014).

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets set for and adopted by all member states of the United Nations is well over a year now from September 2015. Situated in good governance systems, the objectives are found to cut across economic, social inclusion, and environmental sustainable developments. Drawing on currently available data, the SDG index and an SDG Dashboard are

supposed to provide assistance that may help countries to mobilize stakeholders and to identify priorities for early action.

One report, *Ad Hoc Working Group for Youth and the MDGs* (2005), for example, describes the advocacy communication as a crosscutting matter to depict its critical position of nexus. In the monitoring process, another task force (*MDG Gap Task Force Report, 2015*) found and concluded on three key issues: that 1) monitoring was not implementation, 2) data was poor, and 3) mismatched targets. Identifying gaps such as poor implementation communication continuum, its key actors and networks were conspicuous responsible for some of these lapses and occurrences. Yet, Ghana, got ranked as the sixth best in the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] index for the African continent. Mauritius, topped the index table; followed by Botswana, Gabon, Cape Verde and South Africa. Implying that this implementation continuum challenge-gap might go beyond Ghana and Africa. With the several MoI identified already, this paper, therefore, suggests that the continent, having addressed its information, communication development challenge, could improve her policy implementation infrastructure to enhance performance and to advance the SDGs achievements at 2030.

These communication continuum need gaps are identified and filled to enable the new SDGs to do better at targets and goals achievements. It is to position the SDGs index being the last of its kind on a better pedestal of goal achievements than its predecessor, MDGs. Following this introduction brief, the rest of this discussion is first explained briefly the MDGs' advocacy, monitoring and its challenges inclusive of the MoI. Implementation communication is then introduced. Its model is presented, discussed. Ghana's SDGs advocacy vis-à-vis its development communication is perused, reviewed for her preparedness for implementation, then a word for the future.

Ostensibly, data came from three main sources: MDGs and SDGs United Nations [UN] official documents, academic bibliography monitoring the buildup up to SDGs implementation seminars, workshops, newspaper reports for daily updates. From the above discussions, implementation communication and feedback processes tend to be problematic both in theory and practice.

The MDGs' Advocacy

Literature, for example, Peters (2006), Vedung (2002) and Dunsire (1990) demonstrates that gaps are matters between policy and implementation lapses, unresolved matters. Often, these are as a result of poor communications and participation. A critical review at the MDGs communication development tools stands appropriate revealing two key issues as follows (Youth & MDGs, 2004; 2005): Firstly, the targeting and involvement of the youth [definitional ages from 15 to 29 (S4YE, 2014)] considering the fifteen year-span of the MDGs vis-à-vis human capital/resource development (HRD). The youth are the future people and successors: leaders, professionals and others. Secondly, its third part captioned: "Crosscutting Recommendations and Future Steps" argues that successful implementation of the MDGs laid on technical and pragmatic solutions in the context of wholistic people-centred development strategies that will concentrate on cross-cutting issues permeating across all 8 MDGs. And, that affect youth engagement in implementing all the Goals. An outline of these issues depicted the following:

- A. Advocacy and awareness: Young people in the Millennium campaign;
- B. Policies: Young people in the MDG business plan;
- C. Action: Young people implementing the MDGs; and,
- D. Networking and collaboration: Young people working together to implement the MDGs.

These reports suggest that there are two groups of implementers of the MDGs, namely, the youth and the adult. Respectively, while the former was to be introduced for a “perfect” fit and enhanced their participation and contribution for the future; the latter, got introduced and acting (implementing) the MDGs as needed. The *MDG Youth Report* (2004; 2005) proposed a comprehensive report on young people and the Millennium Development Goals be produced by a coalition of UN agencies, NGOs and young people themselves. The idea was great in that it was to promote “mentorship transitional zone”: This is whereby the youth led projects, whether they emphasize social or economic development are often hampered by the following ingredients: lack of and/ poor skills, experience, networks, employment and connections with ‘traditional power centres’ within a community. This interface: “Intergenerational Partnership”, connects experienced adults with young economic and social entrepreneurs was to have been implemented to promote and enhanced livelihoods.

Nevertheless, the fact that these four crosscutting issues had all been tagged Advocacy and awareness, it is considered as one form of communication. First, it is clear that targeting the youth is a priority for transitional purposes. So shall it be with the SDGs too for they remain tomorrows’ people. Second, it is about harmonisation of SDGs into existing country policy and implementation frameworks. Finally, but not the least, Education stood tall in all from the analysis but perhaps not given its due placement in the implementation process despite being a goal on its own [see country level discussion below]. Furthermore, typical of these MDGs and other global bodies reports, the issues seems to go beyond scope instead of being specific and focused; and, therefore, enough to confuse implementation processes. Take for example, as mentioned earlier, the *MDG Gap Task Force*, (2014), reported poor data and mismatched targets, where it found out that monitoring was not implementation.

Lessons from Monitoring MDG 8

As the international community is considering the structure and scope of a post2015 development agenda, the final report of the *MDG Gap Task Force* (2014) has undertaken the responsibility of extracting lessons from its monitoring of Goal 8 that may be useful in monitoring the future global partnership for development. Consistent to the earlier findings above, the reporting experience of the Task Force has noted major implementation gaps, not only regarding the achievement of the targets set in MDG 8, but also regarding its monitoring. Particularly serious, to them, was the lack of quantitative time-bound targets in the five substantive areas, as well as the lack of data to track quantitative and qualitative commitments adequately and in a timely manner.

Furthermore, some MDG 8 indicators displayed a mismatch between targets set and indicators chosen to identify progress. There was also both this mismatch and a shortage of trackable data. For these gaps, Advocacy and Awareness Creation certainly, devoid of implementation communication might not have gone that deep into the actors for better performance. Olsen et al. (2014) confirm that monitoring was poorly done,

implying that it failed to give the needed attention over necessary MoI matters. Not surprising, the MDG Gap Task Force (2015) asserted: Accurate, informative and internationally credible monitoring of the global partnership for development is a prerequisite for delivering an effective global partnership for development.

Olsen et al. (2014: 4) interpretation of Global partnership for development was interesting as it found from two separate independent reports cited: In one country level reporting on MDG 8 according to Caliarì (2013: 18) ‘became an exercise in packaging anything the country [in question was] doing on aid, debt or trade’; in the other, Fukuda-Parr(2010), found developed countries reports referred to their efforts to achieve a successful conclusion to the round as part of their progress in meeting trade-related targets without necessarily using any of MDG 8 targets or indicators of the WTO Doha Development Round. Apart from the separation, these are therefore not true reflective communication reports of the real governance and implementation actions. Olsen et al. (2014) argued that the track record with governance and MoI, especially under the MDGs, suggests several areas for improvement, most notably in moving away from an ad hoc donor driven approach and poorly designed targets.

Organizing Means of Implementation [MoI] for SDGs

Following their analysis, Olsen et al., (2014) show appreciation of the challenge posed by the recent growth in the number of perspectives on MoI and governance challenges to the SDGs at both high and national levels. Recounting for sustainable development from Agenda 21 Earth Summit in 1992’sseven possible means of implementation, ranging from finance through to science; the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in South Africa, 2002, titled Johannesburg Program on Implementation (JPOI) defining a broad mix of means of implementation, ranging from education to data collection; and, recent proliferation of views on MoIwhich could be confusing.

To avoid such possible potential confusion with the growth, Olsen et al. picked on the MoI tall list, transposed it into a single framework paralleling some of the work to Dodds’ (2014): Thus, the approximately 80 references to different aspects of MoI were placed into 25 smaller sub-classifications and ranking. The revelation shows the six most emphasized areas as tabulated below:

Table 1: Six MoI Areas of Emphasis

No	MoI Areas of Emphasis	Percentage (%)
i	Institutional coordination, integration and coherence	10
	Technology transfer and sharing (8%)	8
iii	Trade and FDI	8
iv	ODA	7
v	Stakeholder involvement and (global) partnerships	7
vi	Education, training and awareness	6

Olsen and colleagues further narrowed the specification from the 25 different MoI winding up with three critical different non watertight clusters, namely: (i) technology [14 counts]; (ii) finance [25 counts]; and (iii) institutions [41 counts]. They argue reasonably that research and development is part and parcel of the institutions or even the technology category, depending on any one research perspective as these elements are interactive enough to reinforce one another. It is pictured in Figure 1 below. Also, technology was referred to as more or less infrastructure and hardware; and, institutions encompassed the softer human capital/resources and decision making architectures.

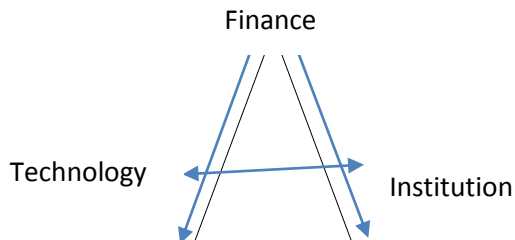


Figure 2: Olsen et al (2014) MoI Compressed Cluster

The scheme's advantage were found to be that of being negotiations facilitator and potentially limiting the ambiguities that undermined MDG 8: One interpretation, there the likelihood of a division between developed and developing countries MoI. Thus, whereas developed countries may push for greater reforms to national institutions, Africa and the developing world preference could be greater provision of finance and technology. The clarity of interest and scope for further specifying how an institutional component can be operationalized at the national level is better structured by finance and technology.

At country level, Olsen et al. (2014) consider national institutions as relatively stable set of structures and processes that convert interests into policies and policies into actions. In so doing, they proposed three core functions associated with national institutions for sustainable development issues require the follows three functions: 1) Articulation, aggregation, and conversion of diverse interests into policies; 2) Allocation and distribution of resources to comply with provisions in those policies; and, 3) Learning to improve policy performance from monitoring and evaluation reports. They concluded that to a certain extent, concentrating on the national level helps to frame the discussion of MoI better.

The Communication Connection

This framework for MoI discussion and acting are missing in the series. That which is found available and mostly at the high levels is the ad hoc character of Advocacy, governance and MoI without a coherent organizing framework. And, yet irrespective of the “many recent papers and proposals stress MoI - albeit seldom speaking to each other” - and its associated potential confusion with the proliferation, Olsen et al. (2014: 4) subsumed communication in articulation in their first function above.

As hinted from the above discussions, policies are mostly ambiguous instruments and even where it is of high quality it does not implement itself (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004; Lynn, 2003). It requires communication which is the basic mode of influence in organization (Drucker, 2008). Direct qualitative discursive communication is, therefore, relevant in this process for better information, knowledge to facilitate meaning and understanding (Habermas, 2008; Branson, 2008; Bryson, 2004). Open and 'free' communication and its strategy, cannot be ignored at any of the stages of implementation. Communication is the common tool and ingredient that runs amongst network(s) of implementers and policy makers as well as to the governed. Bardach (1980) found that implementation is a process of building network of implementers led by fixers; and, Bryson, (2004) adds that implementation needs programme champions and alternating leadership positions from time to time. Together, all these network of implementers communicate to generate maximum performance and policy outcomes.

Government and its institutional communication machinery need to run smoothly with the routine and new policy processes – both for advocacy and implementation periods. As pointed out above, communication poorly handled creates gaps between the input-conversion and conversion-outputs to distort policy implementation and the ensuing outcomes respectively (Vedung, 2002; Dunsire, 1990). In this process, the media has crucial role in the dissemination of information to the targeted audience and the governed (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). The Finnish Prime Minister's Office (2010; 2002) acknowledges this important media role very well in society, technology and citizens participation in decision making to have all incorporated in its scheme of performance tasks to enhance its governance process. However, Mukhtar (2012) found this Finnish Government action, media development, was at the expense of its own public management communication machinery as far as implementation communication was concerned.

Still in Finland, top-down, one directional mode of communication has resulted in the implementation failures (Mukhtar, 2012; Aaltonen and Ikävalko (2002). They adduce lack of the following: implementation communication plan, understanding the policy and strategy. Challenges and problems of communication and understanding arose when strategic issues had to be applied in everyday decision making and acting. Three related factors for successful policy implementation process proposed were to be strategic in communication and acting; identification of and support for strategic actors; and, structures and systems aligned with strategy. Critically, how to link strategy to goals and objectives, and, the alignment of strategy to compensation.

Furthermore, even sufficient communication does not guarantee successful implementation: Instead, among implementers, there should be proper interpretation, acceptance and adoption of the issues. In other words, it is about getting informed, understand, think and act appropriately (Bryson, 2004), in line with the policy agenda vis-à-vis routine work. The challenge, however, stands as how to identify and align information/data in communication and as a tool in policy and organization policy reform needs in confronting routine work so as to achieve better implementation. Mukhtar (2014) further conclude that communication and structuration mattered so much in implementation and governance process.

The Concept of Implementation Communication

Younis and Dividson (1990) outline three approaches to policy implementation as follows: i) prescription for success – the top-down/bottom approach; ii) a radical change – the bottom-top approach; and iii) Implementation as Evolution. Mountjoy and O'Toole's (1979) Theory of Policy Implementation determines effective implementation via resource provision and the specificity of instruction clarity. Communication is the common linkages amongst them. It links up information and coordination between and across the units and sections of the administrative fields. Today's governance systems, according to Rhodes (2006), Peters, (2006) require effective communication for action. To make it an integral part of the governance process, Hill and Hupe (2002), followed Goggin and O'Toole's model of communication for implementation, to also blend communication into policy implementation.

Implementation Properties and MDG/SDGs Linkages

The MDG Gap Task Force (2015: 9) remarked: “monitoring per se, no matter how well undertaken, does not by itself deliver the cooperation promised by the global partnership for development. There needs to be a willingness of policymakers to act on the findings of the monitoring—a willingness that has ebbed and flowed over the past 15 years”. The pledge of using 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) in Official Development Assistance (ODA) had failed to arrive to support MDGs implementation governance processes. Olsen et al. (2014) worry that the poor monitoring and lack of evaluation of the MDGs lacklustre results presents a governance challenges to the SDG MoI which may requires even more attention having the expectation of being aspirational, transformational, and integrate economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

In another development, African heads of state and governments SDGs pursuance stance at the Africa Union [AU] (2014: 24) level, “reiterate that the post-2015 process should galvanize *political will*[emphasis added] and international commitment for a universal development agenda focused on the eradication of both poverty and exclusion.” Rhodes (1997: 88) found political will is “strong, directive, and above all, persistent, executive leadership is longer but more accurate.”

The MDG task force and AU common finding and comments on “will” defines the very critical nexus of the SDGs falling not only on the policymakers but on the implementers too. For, Pressman and Wildavsky, (1984) found implementation to be a joint action that shapes policy outcomes. The joint relationship is that while the policymaker advocates, creates the awareness; the implementer communicates and acts implementation for greater outcomes of the policy. Generally, policy and implementation gap resolution are dealt with between the policymaker and the implementer via communication. The success of implementation has come to be the achievement of objectives or problem solved (Winter, 2006); which may depend on any or several of the implementation barriers including economic and communication (Al-Ghamdi, 1998), based on the will of the actors involved.

“Will” is one of the four [4] key properties of implementation. Will or desire, is free and voluntary of the actor (Olivecrona, 1971). The authors contend it is a power belonging to the individual and is a creative and operative force. It is also based on the consent of others. The other three properties are understand, capability (Vedung, 2002;

Lundquist, 1989) and culture (Morgan, 2006) or setting (Patton, 2002). First, understand is explained: It spells out that face-to-face communication of discursive quality for comprehension and action (Habermas, 2008; Brunsen, 2008; Simon, 1997). To understand is a process that props up the basics of a phenomenon to its complexity level; the relationships and their linkages and how they work or not to provide meaning. Scientific understanding to Morgan, (2006) means having the ability to recongnise the amount of different phenomena that actually form part of a coherent whole as in genuine terms transcending beyond complexities margins to the bottom revealing fundamental patterns. It takes communication to express knowledge, its how and why, skill, feel and so on to demonstrate understanding.

Second, capability: is also about the individual and organization as a whole information and skill acquisition. Druker (2008) prescribes the beginning with individual self-appraisal based on needs assessment and performance based objectives. Capability or capacity as sometime called is the ability to perform and act to expectation. Usually, such a situation calls for new knowledge, new skills to befit the new change. Three component stages are involved, namely, the cognitive or knowledge, doing or behavioural and affective or feeling levels. The culture, setting or locality is where the action takes place. Every organization or institution has its own history, culture or the way of doing things. Morgan, (2006) and Schein, (2004) further found culture to promote ethnocentricity and could blind its people to impede the new changes. Hence the need to examine the culture to ensure obstacle and impediments are removed for the implementation success.

These are the four key ingredients of implementation communication. They are also the determinants of the training to come along. Competency in itself is a motivating factor (Druker, 2008; Colvin, 2008). When properties are well-constituted by mix and blend the result could be what Vedung termed administrative willingness to imply the entire administrative machinery readiness to deliver greatest implementation outcomes. That further means the “Willingness of employees at all levels to assume responsibility for producing results – not simply following the rules – is generally believed to be a major determinant of organizational success” (Pfeffer, 1997: 116 cites Herbert Simon).

Only one out of the four implementation properties, will, was found from the MDGs literature review. Having been identified, its essence was tied to failed policymaker or donor promises delivery of Official Development Assistance [ODA] at implementation and not connected to the implementer. Its linkage to its information, communication tools and strategies are equally paramount at implementation. Blanning (2002) argues that a successful change must have, at least, a plan irrespective of its quality. But this study adds that having the MDGs/SDGs policy or plan for change, for example, cannot not be enough to guarantee for successful implementation without a communication for implementation strategy to the policy.

Learning from MDGs’ challenges and difficulties, failed policy accounts, on the one hand; and, combining Drucker (2008) communication and individual responsibility, with Simon’s variable bounded rationality would establish the basis and standardized needs of Implementation Communication[IC] tools. Thus incorporating and aligning implementation properties with the policy contents to define the IC strategy and action for desirable results achievements [see Figure2below].

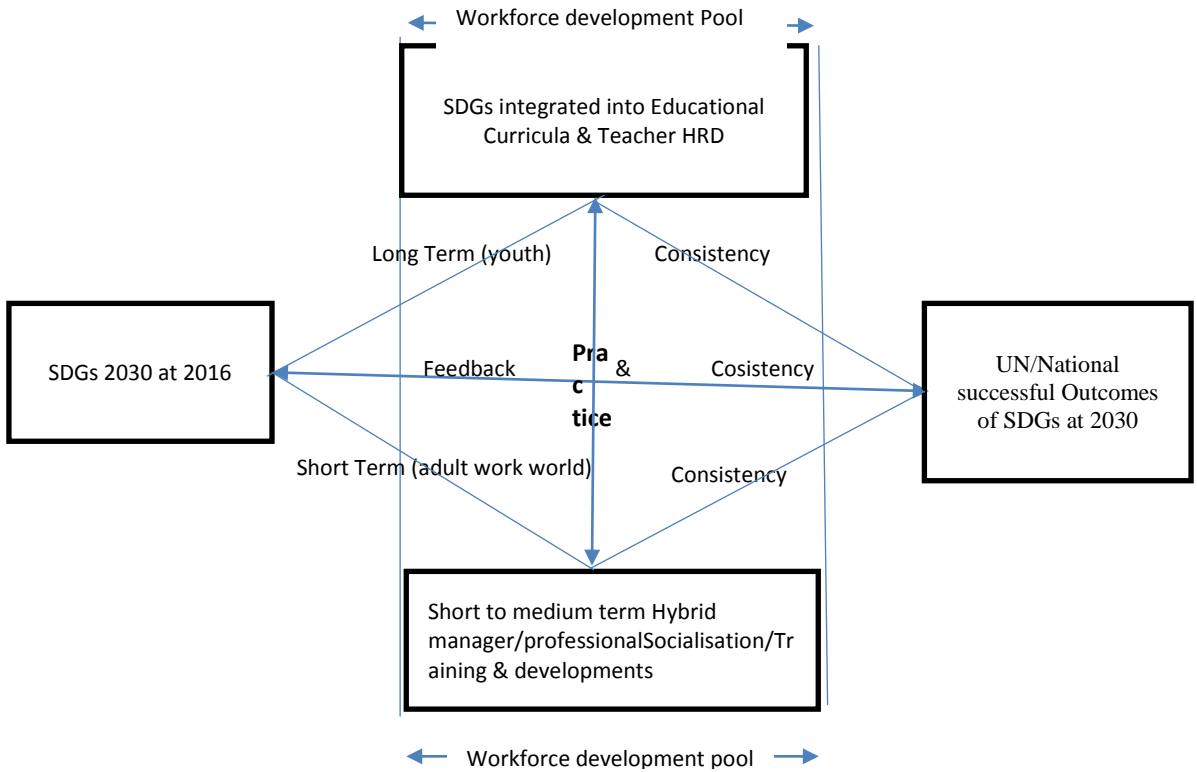


Figure 2: Communicating Implementation of SDGs, 2030

Along Figure 2 communication lines, Dunsire (1990) directs that policy implementation begins with its operationalization: So, in this process, the information variability, knowledge and skill well communicated for understanding, capability development enhances the will of the individual's confidence level for effective action; thus pushing back the Simon's bounded rationality to enable effective performance. As a result, the different professional or functional groups will decipher and translate this policy language inputs into their own while considering their own context for the appropriate understanding of its nitty gritty. Furthermore, the more remote a department/unit or even a community is from the policy source the more the need for experts and interpreters to have direct discursive interaction with actors.

Again, Figure 2 depicts that Implementation communication is about harmonizing and standardizing policy information, in context, for sharing at various organization levels to individuals, reducing barriers and obstacles in order to facilitate understanding, skill development, enhance performance and its outcomes. Albeit a continuum, this is different from advocacy and awareness creation that may inform about an issue and seeking support, make information available to the target individual/people, without actually penetrating the individual and people for action. The concept is synchronized above in Figure 2 spelling out national human resource development [HRD] implementation communication channels and needs, for the institutional development. It sums up the information for effective policy

communication to enable active participation that can in turn lead to its better implementation with desirable outcomes.

Different languages and dialects translations, interpretation and sharing are to follow the policy contents to be transformed into skills and experiences for performances, and outcomes. Following the lines of communication, target setting and measurements, coherence and consistency are there to promote leading and coordination of SDGs at any level. It answers the practical how questions of implementation guided by theory.

National Government Policy and SDGs Communication Readiness

On June 27th, 2016, the Columbia University Professor, Jeffrey Sachs had hinted at the University of Ghana, Accra, that the SDGs 2030 is the last global solution of its kind. This hint, together with the communication short-comings of the MDGs found so far, are enough needs to demand reconsideration of review and update of any existing SDGs implementation plan following the resolution and adoption by the 124 UN (United Nations) member countries. Critically so, when history suggests that poor participation in the policy process is found to be one of the causes of African development problems (United Nations, 1995). Figure 2 demonstrates communication engenders participation; and, built line with Olsen et al. complex cluster to structure coherence and consistency. It is, therefore, appropriate that at the niche of SDGs implementation, heads of state and governments of the AU (2014): resolve to adopt the participatory approach for the post-2015 development agenda formulation process, for, it also provides a unique opportunity for Africa to present a united and common set of priorities.

Therefore, today, creating from global to local networks of communication for SDGs implementation becomes the necessity, if the desired successes are to be attained. So, in the next discussions to follow, the key stakeholder networks are identified to feel their preparedness at this transition period. Nosing around, for example, suggests advocacy and awareness creation are briskly ongoing with the UN Agencies, CSOs (civil society organizations) and some Governmental organizations. The media is visible in this picture with its reportage roles.

NGOs, CSOs and Media SDGs Initiatives

It is observable and from the reportage, that the UN Agencies, especially, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) held workshops on the SDGs for NGOs (non-governmental organisations), CSOs, and some Ghana Government organisations. The UNDP had held a training session of the SDGs for selected Ghanaian journalist with the theme “Mainstreaming SDGs in Development reporting in Ghana” was facilitated by the Media Foundation of West Africa [MFWA], having earlier on had its own. The training was said to be the beginning of an agenda to assist the media to make known the roles of the various actors in ensuring the SDGs goals were met. To enhance SDGs information and data delivery at implementation, a communication expert, Professor Karikari, former executive director of MFWA and SDGs ambassador to Ghana, President Mahama, Co-Chairman of SDGs Advocacy Group of the United Nations had both lately bemoaned the delay in the passage of Ghana Freedom to Information Bill [FIB]. It was faraway in Paris, where the President at the International

Day for Universal Access to Information, reiterated the call on the theme: Powering the SDGs with access to information; at UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). As of May this year, the MFWA (2016) reports of having more than 80 civil society organisations from across all sectors in Ghana with its national CSO Platform on the SDGs. Last September, 2016, the MFWA SDGs groups celebrated its first anniversary reviewing their activities and performances for the future.

Government Institutional SDGs Initiatives

A few Ghana Government individual institutions have taken the SDGs sensitization initiatives up: The National Development Planning Commission [NDPC] had incorporated SDGs into its 40-year development plan and undertaking its advocacy around the country. Similarly, had the Chief Executive of Savana Accelerated Development Authority [SADA] informs the *Daily Graphic* (2016, 30) to propagate the alignment of its Master Plan, 25-year Medium term with the SDGs. The CEO alludes the move was to ensure that the Northern Savana Ecological Zone [NSEZ], comprising 64 out of 216 Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies [MMDAs], did not fall behind in the match towards meeting the SDGs. For, that action "will also help prevent a repeat of what happened with the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] whereby majority of the communities under the NSEZ failed to meet the goals". As against the 17 SDGs goal and set of 169 targets, "SADA zone is already ahead in ensuring that Ghana can report that nobody is left behind because indicators and progress in the place that was left behind under the MDGs are now being monitored".

Readership is reminded to note that monitoring, as found above by MDG Gap Task Force albeit, being a critical part of the policy cycle: It is a process of finding out that which is accomplished or not of the policy with reasons and recommendations for redress. That is neither implementation nor communication for implementation. It is, still, not advocacy and awareness creation but an attempt at repeating earlier mistakes. At the present happenstance, expected of this transitional period (2015-16), advocacy and awareness creation initiatives, devoid of such established errors, are the appropriate policy strategy and tactics to adopt in getting the individual and people informed, and then be prepared for implementation continuum as an actor. SADA, therefore, could be misled in priority setting from that monitoring perspective.

Local Government Communication Units SDGs Initiatives

Now, in his forward to Opoku-Amandwa and Mahama's (2014: iii-iv) *Disseminating Government Policy to Local Communities*, Professor Kwamina Ahwoi, a local government and decentralization expert, acknowledged its seminal and the "oft-neglected component of development communication". The study audits Government policy communication with [40] Coordinating Directors of MMDAs in Southern Ghana. Two key stakeholder were found left out, namely, Information Services Department and the governed or communities. While the former is responsible for government policy dissemination in the MMDAs, the latter, more critically, the governed gap is the action hob and bottom-line beneficiaries of either the positive or negative policy outcomes. The study found government key communicators to be Ministries of Local Government and Rural Development, Communications and Information and their affiliate agencies.

It should be taken seriously coming from Opoku-Amankwa and Mahama (2014), [the latter being head of Local Government Secretariat, Ghana] that information and communication are barely taken away from the taken-for-granted as that receives very little budgetary allocation, strategic and tactical attention in the scheme of policy and implementation. They contend: Information and Communication issues had been mostly adhoc; usually non-specific in design to policy, programme or project, theory based and/or even timed. Agreeably, as a result of that the units of government, MMDAs, are poorly equipped in the governance process as the information and communication network infrastructure is poorly built to serve its purposes. Not only the practice, similar suffrage had hit its theory building and development. For example, Loveless and Bozeman, (1983: 401) found that “Despite the importance of information and communications as mediators and the determinants of innovation process few studies have focused on either”. Loveless and Bozeman argue further that both internal and external interactions with the environment depend upon communications.

Besides the Local Government, searches found not the other two, Ministries of Information and Communication, demonstration of participation in the MDGs/SDGs advocacy and implementation initiatives. Not even President Dramani Mahama’s Co-Chairmanship of the SDGs’ have elicited participatory initiative of any sort so far. The expectation is to have found the former Ministry basing and blending its advocacy and awareness creation upon the latter’s choice of latest effective technologies acquired or better still locally generated that best suited the SDGs communication and implementation initiatives. The lack of human resources, funding, and other institutional weakening factors continue to add-up to such critical initiatives alienation. Put together, these findings further explains away the communities/governed being out of touch to officialdom, implementation and policy benefits.

Education and the Teacher SDGs Initiatives

Five years into MDGs’ implementation, *The Gap Task Force* (2005) found Sustainable Development as an educational issue. It had written that: Education around sustainable development should start in local communities, with in-school activities in which students learn about their own area and its environmental challenges, and then make connections with global problems. Furthermore, that pupils and students be engaged to identify and implement things that would make their own homes and schools surroundings keep up with developments through all forms of educational value for life, be it non-formal, informal and or formal. For example, the task force found young people to be peer educators: Thus, while young people were peer oriented to imply that the youth learn much from their collegial friends. That could be tapped, especially, around issues that adults know little about such as new technologies, to share knowledge, skill and experiences.

Furthermore, in its MDGs’ goal of poverty eradication, Ghana found out that low level of education of the workforce posed the challenge (UNDP and NDPC/GOG (2015). The report estimates 6 indicators from the Ghana Statistical Services that only 19 percent of Ghana’s working-age population have had secondary education or better, while about 48 percent had completed basic education in 2013. The interpretation come to the point that access to highly skilled and better remunerated jobs remain restricted in

the poverty dominated environment, creating the very need for better SDGs implementation.

In a similar but from a broader perspective, Solutions for Youth Employment [S4YE] Coalition(2014), found in its first baseline report rising inequality, rising social unrest, and rising levels of movement of people around the world all herald unprecedented times which call for unprecedented actions. Their core issue is that in this extraordinary times, a record number of young people on the planet being 1.8 billion, with approximately 85 percent of them living in Africa, other developing, emerging economies and in fragile states; and, about a third of them, mostly women are not in employment, education and or training [NEET]; more so, when a billion more young people are projected to enter the job market over the next decade.

The report further established, the probable constraints to youth employment were thought to be borne on the individual level could result from market or government failure, or be a symptom of a weak or unsupportive macroeconomic environment. That notwithstanding, S4YE asserts younger adults between 25 to 34 have the propensity to demonstrate the highest early stage entrepreneurial intention and start-up activity worldwide. Ghana's Kofi Aanaan, former UN Secretary-General, is "convinced more than ever that any society that does not succeed in tapping into the energy and creativity of its youth will be left behind" (S4YE, 2014, 4).

This sectional scour through relevant literature for implementation communication deficits pops up strongly to mandate Education and the teacher to deliver more to people. The clear evidences demonstrate that investments in youth employment do pay off very well (S4YE, 2014). Although implementation literature go across all fields, curricular scope out reveals implementation studies programmes are yet to be accredited and taught in Ghana. Against such educational challenges pondering ought to begin craving for resolutions to the question: How does education and teacher use the SDGs to tap out such resources for better livelihoods in both the short [adult work] and long terms [youth/transitional]?

It is the ensuing answer to the question just posed above that could drive Ghana and Africa towards the AU (2014), stance recommendation that the global post-2015 development agenda give adequate attention to: the development of productive capacity underpinned by value addition, technology and innovation, and infrastructure development; people-centred development with a particular emphasis on youth empowerment and gender equality; natural resources and disaster risk management in the context of sustainable development; peace and security; and a truly inclusive and transformative global partnership. This is important for us to achieve an integrated, prosperous, stable, peaceful and secure Africa that is effectively engaged in the global arena.

The Outlook Ahead

The localization of these 17 UN-led SDGs international policy frameworks to have indigenous ownership and touch in order that implementation and its MoI are best placed ought to be the foremost prioritized strategy following the SDG index and dashboards publication. Deductions from the discussions above show clearly that the MDGs were top-down communicated and left off at the level of advocacy and awareness creation. It was solitary and individual institutional works rather than being

wholistic. Communication failed to penetrate through to the implementer institutions and to the communities. The present transitional happenstances demonstrate the show repeat. Still at the high levels the MDG Gap Task Force found lack of will and commitment among the policymakers promised delivery which affected implementation badly. Besides this force, other information and communicational avoidable implementation factors from MDGs were poor data/information, mismatch indicators and targets. Monitoring, per their advice, should not be taken for implementation. MDGs, in its entirety in Ghana were without a visible leadership and coordination point at any level.

For, smooth and systematic running of the SDGs communication and implementation, there should have had a common stakeholder national source to serve as the operationalization point. Such a national source would constitute the SDGs' operationalization hob spelling out its networks. Resource provision and specificity of instruction raised in the Mountjoy and O'Toole's theory of implementation becomes apparent. Enough theory should be generated to lead and support successful implementation and governance. Thus, pursue well-coordinated approach to the operationalization with emphasis on agility, coherence and consistency of HRD in the institutions/organisations in alignment to the market. The SDGs implementation and training designs are generated accordingly per every language and dialects in order to reach all core actors. While the leadership acted as continuous advocates and rectifiers, role models of the issues communicated for implementation both nationally and locally in the communities.

Per this study, the basic unit source network should be constituted. Including the governed would boost the moral and encourage better participation in this implementation network processes. Also, for the transitional to adult work world purposes and the population numbers [1.8 billion] concern, the teacher and education ripple effects cannot be left out in designing and implementing the SDGs development communication. These, two, added to the existing Ghana Government key communicators at the local and national levels, Ministries of Local Government and Rural Development, Communications and Information and their affiliate agencies play the critical network links for the SDGs communication for implementation successes. That depicts modeling the Olsen et al complex Mol cluster – institution, finance and technology.

Well constituted networks at both national and local levels would encourage bottom-up implementation to complement the traditional top-down approach yielding the critical maximum desirable results. Implementation communication finds solutions to the how and acting questions in the implementation and governance processes. Ghana needs to spell out and establish its basic communication infrastructure; perhaps, an ISD led, to deal with the SDGs, and other government policy advocacy and implementation processes.

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